

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING THE IDENTIFICATION OF
FILES TO BE BACKED UP USING RELATIONAL META DATA**

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CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present invention is related to *Method and Apparatus for the Automatic Migration of Applications and Their Associated Data and Configuration Files*, serial no.

09/_____, attorney docket no. YOR920010276US1 and *Method and Apparatus for
the Automatic Discovery of the Relationships Between Applications and Their Associated
Data and Configuration Files*, serial no. 09/_____, attorney docket no.
YOR920010278US1.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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1. Technical Field:

The present invention relates generally to an improved data processing system,
and in particular to a method and apparatus for managing information about applications
and files. Still more particularly, the present invention provides a method, apparatus, and
computer implemented instructions for automatically identifying files that need to be
backed up using relational meta data. The list of those files is then supplied to a standard
backup program using programatic functions supplied by the present invention.

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2. Description of Related Art:

When an application is installed on a computer system, the setup program, which
is part of the application and supplied by the application supplier, registers with the

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Docket No. YOR920010343US1

operating system that the application will be creating data files of a certain file type on the file system. More specifically, the setup program tells the operating system the type of data files that will be created, edited, deleted, or otherwise manipulated by the application. Data files manipulated by the application are associated with that application as long as that application remains installed on the computer system and, providing that the file type is not changed. If the application is removed, the mapping of the file extension to the application is lost. The current state of the art is to identify the data file type with a one to three-letter filename extension. For example, the setup program for Microsoft Word registers with the operating system to indicate that filenames with the extension ".doc" are associated with Microsoft Word. Microsoft Word is a word processing program available from Microsoft Corporation. As a result, when a user selects a data file to be opened, the operating system uses the filename extension of that data file to determine which application should be launched.

Users typically install dozens of applications on a data processing system, such as editors, e-mail programs, Internet browsers, and business applications such as payroll or inventory access. Each of these applications usually creates, edits, renames, or deletes data files of a certain data type as determined by the file type extension. These data files may include user identification such as users Ids and passwords, application configuration files, reports, and data files. Currently, each application consistently creates data file types associated with an application vendor determined filename extension. For example, Microsoft Word creates document data files using the filename extension ".doc", Lotus WordPro creates document data files using the filename extension ".lwp", and Lotus Notes creates data files using the filename extension ".id" for userid information and ".nsf" for notes databases. Lotus Word Pro and Lotus Notes are available from Lotus Development Corporation. Each application vendor selects a unique filename extension to be used for their application and hopes that no other application vendor selects the

same extension. In the case of some programs that use common types of files such as .mid or .jpg, installing another program will often incorrectly associate the data files with the newly installed application.

As the end user executes applications and works on data files, the list of data files associated with the application continually changes. Some data files may be created, others deleted or edited, and some renamed to other filenames or file type extensions. The user also may place some of these files in other places within the file system. With these types of file manipulations, the files may become hard to locate without using a tool to search the hard disk drive for filenames with a well known filename extension for a particular application. The files also may contain extensions that do not follow the recommended file naming convention. For example, the user may create a Microsoft Word document and save it with the filename extension of “.zoo” instead of the standard .doc extension.

When the user needs to backup files from a data processing system for a particular application, locating these files becomes nearly impossible. In particular, it is difficult to locate all the data files created and required by an application. The files may not be in the same place that they were originally created, and may not have the same filename or filename extension that is indirectly associated with the application. In addition, the application may create data files, such as application settings, that are not registered with the operating systems associations to applications.

For example, Lotus Notes creates a desktop.dsk file to store the layout of the applications workspace, but the file extension .dsk is not associated with Lotus Notes during the applications installation. If the user attempts to back up the data for this applications, all of the files associated with the application should also be backed up, but there is currently no way to insure that all of the data and configuration files have been located and subsequently backed up.

The user can search for all occurrences of a particular file extension, but this would be a tedious task. Even if the user finds all files with a particular extension, there is no way to be sure that all the files of that type have been located because they may have been renamed or moved to another location, such as a network share.

5 Existing backup programs do a satisfactory job of locating the data files associated with a particular application, but only if the files have the correct file type extension expected by the backup program. Also, the backup program will generally search only one folder or directory, and expects the data files to always be located in that directory or folder.

10 Therefore, it would be advantageous to have an improved method, apparatus, and computer implemented instructions for backing up files in which a user is relieved from having to search for data files associated with an application.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention provides for a method, apparatus, and computer
implemented instructions for identifying files to be backed up using relational meta data
and backing up the files. In a preferred embodiment the list of those files may be
supplied to a standard backup program. In response to a request to backup data
associated with an application, a data store is queried containing meta data regarding files
10 associated with the application in which the data store includes meta data describing the
files accessed by the application. A result is received in response to querying the data
store, and this result is used as input to the backup program. The backup program
retrieves a list of files to be backed up or restored using programatic functions supplied
by the present invention. The files are backed up to a storage system using a standard
15 backup program.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the
5 appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use,
further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the
following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction
with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a pictorial representation of a network of data processing system in
10 which the present invention may be implemented;

Figure 2 is a block diagram of a data processing system that may be implemented
as a server in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating a data processing system in which the
present invention may be implemented;

Figure 4 is a diagram illustrating components involved in backing up applications
15 and associated data in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 5 is a diagram of meta data describing relationships between applications
and associated data in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a diagram illustrating an example call in accordance with a preferred
20 embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a flowchart of a process used for installing the processes for
automatically discovering relationships between applications and associated data in
accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 8 is a flowchart of a process used for handling requests for file operations
25 in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 9 is a flowchart of a process used for processing an open operation in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 10 is a flowchart of a process used for processing a delete operation in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

5 **Figure 11** is a flowchart of a process used for renaming in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 12 is a flowchart of a process used for processing a close or copy operation in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

10 **Figure 13** is a flowchart of a process used for processing queries for file information in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 14 is a flowchart of a process used by an application to obtain a list of files in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 15 is a flowchart of a process used for backing up data using relational meta data in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

15 **Figure 16** is a flowchart of a process used for backing up in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the figures, **Figure 1** depicts a pictorial representation of a network of data processing system in which the present invention may be implemented.

5 Network data processing system **100** is a network of computers in which the present invention may be implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains a network **102**, which is the medium used to provide communications links between various devices and computers connected together within network data processing system **100**. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire, wireless communication links, or fiber optic
10 cables.

In the depicted example, server **104** is connected to network **102** along with storage unit **106**. In addition, clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are connected to network **102**. These clients **108**, **110**, and **112** may be, for example, personal computers or network computers. In the depicted example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files, operating system
15 images, and applications to clients **108-112**. Clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are clients to server **104**. Network data processing system **100** may include additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown. In the depicted example, network data processing system **100** is the Internet with network **102** representing a worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another. At the
20 heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed data communication lines between major nodes or host computers, consisting of thousands of commercial, government, educational and other computer systems that route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area
25 network (WAN). **Figure 1** is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the present invention.

Referring to **Figure 2**, a block diagram of a data processing system that may be implemented as a server, such as server **104** in **Figure 1**, is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Data processing system **200** may be a symmetric multiprocessor (SMP) system including a plurality of processors **202** and **204** 5 connected to system bus **206**. Alternatively, a single processor system may be employed. Also connected to system bus **206** is memory controller/cache **208**, which provides an interface to local memory **209**. I/O bus bridge **210** is connected to system bus **206** and provides an interface to I/O bus **212**. Memory controller/cache **208** and I/O bus bridge **210** may be integrated as depicted.

Peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus bridge **214** connected to I/O bus **212** 10 provides an interface to PCI local bus **216**. A number of modems may be connected to PCI local bus **216**. Typical PCI bus implementations will support four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors. Communications links to clients **108-112** in **Figure 1** may be provided through modem **218** and network adapter **220** connected to PCI local bus **216** 15 through add-in boards.

Additional PCI bus bridges **222** and **224** provide interfaces for additional PCI local buses **226** and **228**, from which additional modems or network adapters may be supported. In this manner, data processing system **200** allows connections to multiple network 20 computers. A memory-mapped graphics adapter **230** and hard disk **232** may also be connected to I/O bus **212** as depicted, either directly or indirectly.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted in **Figure 2** may vary. For example, other peripheral devices, such as optical disk drives and the like, also may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted. The depicted example is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present 25 invention.

The data processing system depicted in **Figure 2** may be, for example, an IBM

e-Server pSeries system, a product of International Business Machines Corporation in Armonk, New York, running the Advanced Interactive Executive (AIX) operating system or LINUX operating system.

With reference now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram illustrating a data processing system is depicted in which the present invention may be implemented. Data processing system **300** is an example of a client computer. Data processing system **300** employs a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus architecture. Although the depicted example employs a PCI bus, other bus architectures such as Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) and Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) may be used. Processor **302** and main memory **304** are connected to PCI local bus **306** through PCI bridge **308**. PCI bridge **308** also may include an integrated memory controller and cache memory for processor **302**. Additional connections to PCI local bus **306** may be made through direct component interconnection or through add-in boards. In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **310**, SCSI host bus adapter **312**, and expansion bus interface **314** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by direct component connection. In contrast, audio adapter **316**, graphics adapter **318**, and audio/video adapter **319** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by add-in boards inserted into expansion slots. Expansion bus interface **314** provides a connection for a keyboard and mouse adapter **320**, modem **322**, and additional memory **324**. Small computer system interface (SCSI) host bus adapter **312** provides a connection for hard disk drive **326**, tape drive **328**, and CD-ROM drive **330**. Typical PCI local bus implementations will support three or four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors.

An operating system runs on processor **302** and is used to coordinate and provide control of various components within data processing system **300** in **Figure 3**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating system, such as Windows 2000, which is available from Microsoft Corporation. An object oriented programming system such as Java may run in conjunction with the operating system and provide calls to

the operating system from Java programs or applications executing on data processing system 300. "Java" is a trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented operating system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive 326, and may be loaded into main
 5 memory 304 for execution by processor 302.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware in **Figure 3** may vary depending on the implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash ROM (or equivalent nonvolatile memory) or optical disk drives and the like, may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in **Figure 3**.

10 Also, the processes of the present invention may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

As another example, data processing system 300 may be a stand-alone system configured to be bootable without relying on some type of network communication interface, whether or not data processing system 300 comprises some type of network
 15 communication interface. As a further example, data processing system 300 may be a personal digital assistant (PDA) device, which is configured with ROM and/or flash ROM in order to provide nonvolatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data.

The depicted example in **Figure 3** and above-described examples are not meant to
 20 imply architectural limitations. For example, data processing system 300 also may be a notebook computer or hand held computer in addition to taking the form of a PDA. Data processing system 300 also may be a kiosk or a Web appliance.

With reference now to **Figure 4**, a diagram illustrating components involved in backing up applications and associated data is depicted in accordance with a preferred
 25 embodiment of the present invention. The components illustrated in **Figure 4** may be implemented as software and data structures in data processing systems, such as data

processing system **200** in **Figure 2** and data processing system **300** in **Figure 3**.

In the depicted examples, source **400** includes operating system **402**, which contains file functions **404**. These file functions are used to perform different functions on files, such as file **406** in response to requests from applications, such as application **408**. These functions include, for example, opening, closing, creating, copying, renaming, and deleting files. When the user starts application **408**, application **408** generally requires a data file to act upon. For instance, starting a word processor usually requires that the user indicate the name of the file to be created, edited, or processed. Most applications have some type of open menu where the user specifies which file is to be opened. The user generally clicks a "file open" button or menu item to open a file, and is then presented with a list of files meeting the user's work criteria.

Using current technology, the list of files available to work on is determined by the file type, which may be identified through the file type extension. When an application is installed, it usually notifies the operating system as to which file type extension should be associated with that program. For example, Microsoft Word notifies the operating system that it will use files with the .doc extension. After the application is installed, if the user selects a file with the .doc extension, the Microsoft Word application will be launched to operate on that file. Using current technology, the association between the application program and the file type extension exists until that application program is removed from the system. If the application is removed, the removal program also removes any associations that had been established at the time the application was installed.

With the mechanism of the present invention, calls by the application **408** to file functions **404** are hooked or routed to device driver **410**. Although a device driver is illustrated, the present invention may employ a service other than device driver **410** depending on the particular implementation. These functions calls include opening,

closing, creating, copying, renaming, and deleting a file. Each time a call for one of the file functions is made, the call is intercepted by device driver 410. The name of the program making the call is identified by device driver 410 along with the name of the data file being operated on.

5 For example, device driver 410 hooks the single entry point of the "file close" function. Each time a file, such as file 406, is closed, the close is intercepted by device driver 410. Device driver 410 identifies the name of application 408 closing file 406, along with the name of file 406. In this example, file 406 is opened and closed by application 408, representing a normal close of file 406. The relational meta data that
10 represents the association of file 406 to application 408 is updated in database 412 with the new information. If application 408 opens file 406, but another software entity, such as operating system 402 closes file 406, then an abnormal close may have occurred because of a failure in application 408.

 Each time a file is opened or closed, the relational meta data for the given file is
15 updated by device driver 410. The mechanism of the present invention also may hook the operating system entry points for file erase, file rename, file move, and file copy functions. These additional hooks also update the relational meta data in database 412. If an application program, in the process of executing, creates a file, the file creation information and association to the application program is stored in relational meta data.
20 If the application program deletes a file, the relational meta data for the deleted file is deleted. The relational meta data for file 406 is updated in database 412 if the application renames file 406. It is important to note that, in these examples, in the event that the same file is accessed by more than one program, the database will contain the reference to the application that accessed the file most recently.

25 If the user copies file 406 to another location, the relational meta data for file 406 is updated with the new location. If multiple applications perform activity against file

406, the relational meta data for file 406 is updated to reflect the association to multiple applications.

When application 408 is started, the user is presented with a list of files to work on, depending on the file type extension registered with the operating system by

5 application 408. The user selects one or more files to work on, and then confirms the choice by clicking an OK button or similar type of control. Some application programs, such as Microsoft Word, keep a finite length list of the files acted upon in persistent storage. One of the options the user has is to select the history list of files that have been accessed by the application program.

10 The list of files displayed that can be acted upon is based on the file type extension. However, the user may have renamed the file with a different extension, or moved the file to another area on the disk or even another computer or network share. Application 408 has no direct knowledge of these files, their new extension, or their new location because the file type extension has changed or the files have been moved to an
15 unknown location.

Because this information is stored in database 412, a backup application or scheduler, such as backup application 414, can query database 412 through calls to device driver 410 using programatic function supplied by the present invention to find the file names and location of all of the data and configuration files associated with the
20 application 408. Backup application 414 then uses the list of files from database 412 to present to the user at the time backup application 414 is run. Instead of choosing a data file of a certain file type extension and from a specified physical location on the disk, the user can now select any file that had been created by application 408 and from any location on the disk. In this example, backup application 414 may be any custom-written
25 backup application or any commercially available backup applications such as Tivoli Storage Manager, or Veritas Backup Exec. Tivoli Storage Manager is available from

Tivoli Systems, Inc. and Veritas Backup Exec. is available from Veritas Software Corporation. The files are then backed up to storage system **416** in these examples. Storage system **416** may be a local backup device or a remote backup device connected to source **400** by a network, such as network **102** in **Figure 1**. Storage system **416** may
 5 contain one or more storage devices, such as, for example, a hard disk drive, a tape drive, or a rewriteable compact disk drive.

The access to database **412** may be provide through standard application programming interface (API) calls made to device driver **410** from backup application **414** or another application. If multiple applications perform activities against the same
 10 file, the relational meta data stored in database **412** is updated to reflect the association with multiple applications.

Using the access methods provided by the invention the user can query the relational database with such queries as:

- Show me the files created between December 1, 2000 and December 15, 2000.
- 15 Show me the files created since January 1, 2001 by the user stevemmas.
- Show me all of the files associated to the Lotus 1-2-3 program.

The association of applications with files and file locations may extend to files created, stored, or moved on remote storage devices located on another computer system. The mechanism of the present invention may be installed as an integral part of operating
 20 system **402**, such as within a kernel. Alternatively, the mechanism may be added as a patch or add-on component if added to operating system **402** after its installation.

In these examples, the meta data is stored in a data store and takes the form of a database. A data store is some data structure or system used to store meta data. Another data store, which may be used, is a flat file or a table.

25 When a user or administrator desires to backup data for an application, such as application **408**, the user invokes the mechanism of the present invention. The user may

select a "backup" function through backup application **414** located on source **400**.
 Alternatively, the backing up of files may be initiated remotely through backup server
418. This backup option presents a menu of the files to be backed up by reading the
 relational meta data for each file that is related to the relevant application. The user can
 5 then accept or refuse for one or more files to be copied or backed up to the new system.
 Alternatively, the backup through backup server **418** or backup application **414** may be
 employed to identify files without requiring a user to select files for backup.

The mechanism of the present invention queries the relational meta data in
 database **412** and builds a list of the files to transfer from source **400** to storage system
 10 **416**. Backup server **418** or backup application **414** acts as an agent or intermediary to
 ensure that the data is transferred successfully and completely, and that the data is copied
 and stored on storage system **416**. Files may be transferred from source **400** to
 management server **418** for temporary storage. When storage system **416** is ready to
 accept files or has been identified, then the files may be sent from backup server **418** to
 15 storage system **416**. Alternatively, the files may be transferred directly from source **400**
 to storage system **416** with backup server **418** monitoring and verifying the transfer of
 data.

When backup application **414** is used on source **400**, the application begins the
 process of copying the necessary data and configuration files to storage system **416** until
 20 all required files have been successfully copied.

Turning next to **Figure 5**, a diagram of meta data describing relationships
 between applications and associated data is depicted in accordance with a preferred
 embodiment of the present invention. In the depicted example, records **500**, **502**, and **504**
 are examples of meta data, which may be stored in a database, such as database **412** in
 25 **Figure 4**. Record **500** includes sections **506**, **508**, **510**, **512**, **514**, and **516**. Section **506**
 identifies the date of the last file update. Section **508** indicates the time the file was last

accessed in hours, minutes, and seconds. Section **510** identifies the name of the file, while section **512** identifies the location of the file. The application making the call for the function is identified in section **514**. The user is identified in section **516**.

With reference now to **Figure 6**, a diagram illustrating an example call is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Call **600** is an example of a call, which may be used to obtain a file list. The call specifies an application name as well as criteria, which may be used to search for records, such as records **500**, **502**, and **504** in **Figure 5** within database **412** in **Figure 4**. The criteria may be, for example, a list of files associated with the Lotus Word Pro application that are more than 30 days old.

Turning next to **Figure 7**, a flowchart of a process used for installing the processes for automatically discovering relationships between applications and associated data is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process begins by detecting a system boot of the data processing system (step **700**). Next, hooks are installed (step **702**). The hooks installed are those for use by a device driver to hook or intercept calls for file functions. Then, the system boot is continued (step **704**) with the process terminating thereafter.

The flowcharts illustrated in **Figures 8-12** are examples of processes used to automatically discover relationships between applications and associated data. With reference now to **Figure 8**, a flowchart of a process used for handling requests for file operations is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 8** may be implemented in a device driver, such as device driver **410** in **Figure 4**.

The process begins by receiving a request for a file operation (step **800**). Next, a determination is made as to whether the file operation is to open a file (step **802**). If the file operation is not open, then a determination is made as to whether the file is to be

deleted (step 804). If the file is not to be deleted, a determination is made as to whether the file is to be renamed (step 806).

If the file is not to be renamed, a determination is made as to whether the file is closed or copied (step 808). If the file is not to be closed or copied, file operation continues (step 810) with the process terminating thereafter. At this point, the file operation request is passed to the actual file function that is to process the request.

With reference again to step 808, if the file is to be closed or copied, close or copy operation is performed (step 812) with the process proceeding to step 810. Turning back to step 806, if the file is to be renamed, a rename operation is performed (step 814) with the process proceeding to step 810 thereafter. With reference again to step 804, if the file is to be deleted, a delete operation is performed (step 816) and the process proceeds to step 810 as described above. With reference again to step 802, if the file is opened, an open operation is performed (step 818) with the process proceeding to step 810.

Turning next to **Figure 9**, a flowchart of a process used for processing an open operation is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 9** is a more detailed description of step 818 in **Figure 8**.

This process is called in response to an open operation being present. The process begins with a determination as to whether a record of the file identified for the operation is present in the database (step 900). If the file is not present in the database, an identification of the file is added to the database (step 902) with the process returning thereafter for a continuation of the file operation. The identification may include, for example, the name of the file, the name of application requesting the operation, a date, and a time of the request.

Otherwise, a determination is made as to whether the file is found in the same location (step 904). If the file is found at the same location, the process returns to continue processing the file operation. If the file is not in the same location, the record is

updated with the new location (step 906) with the process then returning to continue processing of the file operation. The open operation occurs immediately because the database cannot be updated until it is known that the file can be opened.

With reference now to **Figure 10**, a flowchart of a process used for processing a delete operation is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 10** is a more detailed description of step 816 in **Figure 8**.

The process begins with a determination as to whether a record of the file is in a database (step 1000). If the file is in the database, the database is updated (step 1002) with the process then returning to continue the file operation. This update reflects the application closing the file as well as other information, such as a time and date of the operation. Otherwise, the process returns without performing any action in the database. In this instance, the file is not tracked by the mechanism of the present invention.

Turning next to **Figure 11**, a flowchart of a process used for renaming is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 11** is a more detailed description of step 814 in **Figure 8**.

The process begins with a determination as to whether a record of the file is in the database (step 1100). If the file is not in the database, a new record is established in the database (step 1102), and the process returns to continue processing the file operation. The new record may be in a format, such as, for example, record 500 in **Figure 5**. Otherwise, the database is updated (step 1104) with the process returning for continued processing of the file operation.

With reference now to **Figure 12**, a flowchart of a process used for processing a close or copy operation is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 12** is a more detailed description of step 812 in **Figure 8**.

The process begins with a determination as to whether a record of the file is in a database (step 1200). If the file is in the database, a reference is updated (step 1202) with the process returning to continue the file operation. Otherwise, a new record for the file is added to the database (step 1204), and the process returns for continuation of the file operation.

Turning next to **Figure 13**, a flowchart of a process used for processing queries for file information is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 13** may be implemented in a device driver, such as device driver 410 in **Figure 4**.

The process begins by receiving a call for file information (step 1300). This call may be received from an application, such as application 408 in **Figure 4**. Next, a database is queried for file names and locations of files for the application identified in the query (step 1302). A result is received from the database (step 1304), and returned to the caller (step 1306) with the process terminating thereafter.

With reference now to **Figure 14**, a flowchart of a process used by an application to obtain a list of files is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 14** may be implemented in an application, such as application 408 in **Figure 4**.

The process begins by sending a call for a list of files for an application (step 1400). This application may be the application generating the call for the list or for another application. This call is sent to a device driver, such as device driver 410 in **Figure 4**. Next, a result is received (step 1402). Then, a list of file names and locations is presented to on a display to the user (step 1404) with the process terminating thereafter.

Turning next to **Figure 15**, a flowchart of a process used for backing up data using relational meta data is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 15** may be implemented in a backup

process, such as backup application 414 or backup server 418 in **Figure 4**.

The process begins by receiving a request from a requestor to backup data for an application (step 1500). The request may be made by a user or by a process. For example, the process may be a timer or scheduler application, which initiates a backup in response to an event or the passage of some predetermined amount of time. Next, a request is made for relational meta data for the application from a database (step 1502). The relational meta data is received by the requestor (step 1504). Files associated with application are identified using the relational meta data (step 1506). The identified files are requested (step 1508), and then received by the requestor (step 1510). Then, the identified files are transferred to a backup device (step 1512). Next, a confirmation is sent to the requestor (step 1514). The confirmation may be, for example, a message in a popup window or an e-mail message. A user or organization is billed for the backup (step 1516) with the process terminating thereafter. In this case, the billing is performed on a per backup basis. These backup services may be billed using other schemes, such as, for example, billing on a monthly basis for all backups or billing based on the amount of data backed up.

With reference now to **Figure 16**, a flowchart of a process used for backing up is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The process illustrated in **Figure 16** may be implemented in a backup application, such as backup application 414 or backup server 418 in **Figure 4**. In this particular example, user input is received to initiate and select files for to be backed up by a user.

The process begins by receiving a request from a user to backup files for an application (step 1600). The user input may be received through a graphical user interface (GUI). For example, the user may select a "backup" button in the GUI. This request also may be received from another application, such as a timer process or a scheduler program.

Next, files associated with the application are identified (step **1602**). A list of identified files is presented to the user (step **1604**). The files may be presented in a number of different ways in GUI. For example, a window containing a list of files may be presented on the GUI. A user may select files from the list that are to be backed up, while other files will be ignored. User input selecting the files is then received (step **1606**). Requested files are selected (step **1608**), and the identified files are received (step **1610**). Then, the identified files are stored on a destination (step **1612**). A verification of the backup of the identified files is presented to the user (step **1614**). The user is billed for the backup of the files (step **1616**) with the process terminating thereafter.

In the example illustrated in **Figure 16**, a user may initiate the processes from backup server **418** in **Figure 4** in a remote data processing system or using backup application **414** at data processing system, such as source **400**. The files also may be transferred directly from the source to the destination, rather than being stored temporarily by backup server **418** before being sent to storage system **416**. Also, these processes may be implemented in storage system **416** without requiring an intermediary, such as backup server **418**.

Thus, the present invention provides an improved method, apparatus, and computer implemented instructions for the automatic discovery of files to be backed up to a destination storage system. The identification of files to be backed up is based on meta data collected during the creation and accessing of files by an application on the source data processing system. This data is collected at an operating system level in the depicted examples. When data is to be backed up to a destination storage system, the mechanism of the present invention is invoked to retrieve the meta data. This retrieved meta data is used to identify the files and their locations on the source data processing system. Based on these identifications, the files are copied or moved from the source data processing system to the destination storage system. With the mechanism of the present invention

problems associated with changing extensions for files are avoided. Although the mechanism of the present invention has been illustrated with respect to a single application, the process of the present invention may be applied to multiple applications to backup data associated with these applications.

5 It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully functioning data processing system, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the processes of the present invention are capable of being distributed in the form of a computer readable medium of instructions and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing
10 media actually used to carry out the distribution. Examples of computer readable media include recordable-type media, such as a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a RAM, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, and transmission-type media, such as digital and analog communications links, wired or wireless communications links using transmission forms, such as, for example, radio frequency and light wave transmissions. The computer
15 readable media may take the form of coded formats that are decoded for actual use in a particular data processing system.

 The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to
20 those of ordinary skill in the art. Although the depicted illustrations show the mechanism of the present invention embodied on a single server, this mechanism may be distributed through multiple data processing systems. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various
25 embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.